

The Australian National University

Institute of the Arts



Canberra School of Art

Graduate Diploma of Art

1992

JUNQINAN CHEN

REPORT

Presented in fulfillment of the Requirement
of the Graduate Diploma of Art

CONTENTS

page

Acknowledgement	-----	1
Introduction	-----	2
Concepts	-----	3
Fabric Design / Printed Fabric	-----	12
Fabric 1	-----	13
Fabric 2	-----	14
Fabric 3	-----	15
Fabric 4	-----	16
Fabric 5	-----	17
Curriculum Vitae	-----	18
Original Proposal	-----	19
Bibliography	-----	21

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to the people who helped through the year with their encouragement and support.

In particular thanks to my supervisor - Valerie Kirk.
Thanks also to Liz Williamson and Annie Trerillian who have made this past year a great learning experience.

For Support and advice I would also like to thank Robert Mendham, Tim Rowston, Nigel London, Janis Dzelde & Ingo Kleinert, my classmates have provided warm friendship.

To my other friends - Kong, Jim Sullivan, Sidney Wang, Christin White, Edward etc, thanks for helping.

Here, my special thanks to my wife - Yuan for understanding and putting up with my stree.

Thanks my parents for their unconditional support and love.

May god be with you all.

INTRODUCTION

In 1990 I came from China to Australia to investigate the difference between an ancient Eastern country and contemporary Western culture.

The world is unpredictable in its cultural changes. Over the last hundred years the West raised her head examining East and later the East looked back at the West.

Traditional cultures change when confronted by other dominant cultures. Traditional cultures adopt materialism and concepts from contemporary Western culture and the Western culture looks at the art, philosophy and spiritual life of traditional cultures.

During the year of research and study as a postgraduate student, I concentrated on the translation of imagery from the primitive arts language of ancient Chinese painted pottery. My intention was not merely to copy the ancient imagery but to work with this using my own design language and methods. In order to do this I researched contemporary Western art and design.

The designs were transferred to screenprinted fabric. This area required technical research as the practical aspects of screenprinting were new to me.

In this report I will record my thoughts and working process for the year. I will include drawings which show my response - to the primitive painted pottery. My folio includes the working drawings, design developments and sample prints. Five lengths of screenprinted fabric show the new developments in my design language.

CONCEPTS



1. The Reasons I Chose Primitive Chinese Pottery:

At the beginning of the 1st semester. I was concentrating research on the imagery of Chinese traditional opera masks. I discovered that the image on the opera mask was derived from primitive pottery and Chinese calligraphy. I decided to focus my research on the primitive Chinese pottery.



During China's new stone age this pottery was painted in colour. This has been recognized as an important stage in human development. At that time the natural character was changed into chemical character. It expressed more aspects of man's thoughts and judgements of beauty than any creation before. The pottery is representative of China's primitive tribal arts.

China is international famous for "pottery" and it is from this that the English word "China" comes.



2. Consideration of Primitive Arts:

We research the primitive art it bases on two ways which include :

- a. The unearthed historical relics which were from ancient civilization areas.
- b. Modern primitive nations who divide far away from modern civilization society are living as tribes.

The concept of primitive usually are both of them.



Painted pottery first appeared in China about 7000 years ago, when the primitive human being made images from their sense of the natural surrounding world.



(China)

They treated water, plant and animal life, as super natural power and worshipped them. these elements are represented both in a realistic manner and as abstracted symbols. When I first looked at Aboriginal art, I was astonished to discover that the images were very similar to those of Chinese primitive pottery, and that Australian Aborigines to-day still work with the same symbolic imagery.

Both cultures work with pattern made up of dot and line creating rhythm & separate shapes. The use of colour is also similar.



(Aborigine)

The pattern in Chinese in painted pottery was made up of black red or while over red and brown or dark yellow. Australian Aboriginal people drew patterns on red brown or dark yellow bark in white, black, red or yellow. Both sets of colours came from natural mineral substances or plant materials.



(Africa)

I believe that there are similarities in the images produced by primitive tribal cultures which come from social & environmental circumstances. Compared with the huge and mighty nature, the human being is very small and weak. Man is frightened by nature, but wants to control it. This simple thinking is obvious in the imagery of the primitive arts. All of the primitive arts were made as products of the thinking of a time and place and were not at that time considered "Art". The primitive cultures of Africa, America and Australia shared the same character expressed in forms and images. (illustrations)

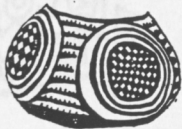
3. Considerations of Primitive Art From a Western Art Perspective:

The considerable strength of primitive art greatly moves people of the modern world. Patterns and sudden changeable rhythm were regarded as the natural, expression of mankind's primitive simple, artistic thoughts.

Contemporary artists, tired of modern art conventions look towards nature and honest interpretations. Primitive art has become an area that they judge themselves against, to develop a new art language of dreaming and longing for day and night.

Paul Gauguin as a post-french Impressionist (1848-1903) is an example. He refused to study with the traditional method. Instead he searched for simple styles of primitive character which had special qualities. He gave up his city, cultured lifestyle and went to live on an island in the Pacific Ocean. He married a native island woman. He concentrated on finding the natural beauty of the islanders and their way of life. His art was filled with his feelings - as in poetry - single, strong, vivid and exciting.

There are more examples of artists from post-Impressionism to Abstraction who depended upon reference to the primitive arts. Henri Rousseau established a school of primitive art.



Images such as fish, bird, fog, man, pattern etc, were taken from primitive Chinese pottery and translated into textile designs. Some designs were also taken from cave paintings. Other designs have also come from Inca, Eskimo and Astrological sources symbols remaining from the ancient arts. A Tam-Tam design consisted of primitive designs from a Tam-Tam drum. In contemporary, Western design, I admire British designer, Zandra Rhodes. She has the ability to search & find beauty. She travelled throughout the world, absorbing and selecting imagery from different nations. She began work in 1970. When she arrived in America, She looked at Indian feathers. From there she created a series of designs for textiles with a contemporary style.

Looking at Australian designers, I enjoy the work of Jenny Kee. She took elements from Aboriginal art and combines with strong, exciting colour combinations, particular to Australia. The overall effect is striking. Her textile designs rely on the re-emerging of a primitive sense or feeling. The Textiles become exciting, contemporary work of art.

Debtor Lesser, who relates to Tiwi design has a style which is bold, strong and has decorative qualities. She creates qualities which have not previously been seen in work

Generally, I have discovered that in art there is constant reference back to the primitive arts. The most primitive images become the most modern, the most national become the most global.

4. The First Series of Drawings From Painted Pottery.

I came from China, which has five thousand years of culture and history. I am studying in Australia which has only two-hundred years of white settlement.



My first impression was that Australia is large, broad, full of sunshine, with strong colour. I have now been here more than 2 years. I have chosen to research areas of Western modern art and am trying to combine imagery from this with imagery from Chinese primitive arts. I try, using these forms to create a personal visual language.

At first I developed a series of studies from painted pottery. (works attached)

The images on the pottery depict a large, broad and rich land which is a natural garden for animals. The primitive human being existed for many years by hunting. They had a special relationship with animals. Many flying birds and running animals are shown in the painting. The style may be simple clumsy, abstract and show birds, frogs, fish deer etc. (works attached)



Frog patterns were very popular but patterns with humans were seldom painted. A rare example of painting with figures is a group of figures in a dancing pattern. 5 dancers facing the same direction, one led stepping forward, hold hands. This image symbolises an activity both in prayer and after hunting. The simpler drawing uses



only a few lines but is vivid and expressive.

(picture attached)



Later dot patterns, water, wave and geometric patterns are popular. I was surprised to see how modern the patterns on the pottery from the new stone age, thousands of years ago, looked.



When I painted this series, I tried to convey the experience that the primitive people felt, using straight and pure brush strokes. I used shapes and forms from primitive pattern but working towards a more decorative style. I worked directly painting pure acrylic paint on cotton. The working methods are simple - not relying on technical skills. This parallels the basic responses of fear, worship and admiration for natural beauty.



This group of drawings summarises my research into primitive painted pottery. This is the source material for the fabric designs.

5. Consideration of Fabric Design.

The printed design is not the same as the primitive arts nor is it the same as modern drawing which seeks to stimulate a sense of feeling. The printed fabric must be designed for the function it will be used for and have considered aesthetic qualities. The drawing is pure in using colour unrestricted by technique, as in the printing. There are fewer restrictions in

the drawing process, allowing an exploratory process to take place, dealing with emotion the sub-conscious. The design for print comes from this but is limited by technical aspects.

The limitations are in the use of colour and shape these are considerations which apply to hand screen printing which are different from industrial printing.

In industrial screenprinting colour and shape can be reproduced on fabric exactly.

In hand screenprinting, registration of the colours is problematic and there can be difficulties in achieving small, fine shapes unless over printing with "super-cover".

There for larger, broader shapes are the best option and relate well to the primitive characteristics.

When the overall feel of the design is decided and understood the techniques, the specific problems of shape and pattern will be obvious. The success of a design for print is dependant upon the forms. The intention of the designer should be embodied by the forms. I first started to solve the structure and cantonments and then the design. First the motifs were designed, then they were arranged in a composition.

The overall composition is easy to see in black and white only without the added

element of colour. Harmony is searched for by increasing and decreasing the amounts of black and white. (pictures attached)

6. Colour.

I designed a series of colour-way. The three groups are:
<1>. Black and white;
<2>. Strong colours;
<3>. Soft colours;

The strong colours are based on my impressions of colour in Australia. When I first arrived in Australia the strong colour made a deep impression on me. The wide land full of sunshine, blue sky, white sandbanks and jade green sea give Australia its special colours. In Aboriginal arts, red yellow, brown, black and white are the strong colours used in contrast with their dark brown skin. It is harmonious, colourful and exciting. I was amazed to discover that the colours of the ochres used by Aboriginal people came from the ground.

Jenny Kee's work shows an understanding of the special colours of Australia. She absorbed of the colours used in Aboriginal Art and then developed this in her own work.

In this group of designs I tried to express my response to Australian colour.

7. Technical Aspects of Screenprinting.

Screenprinting is my chosen method of applying the designs.

In screenprinting, the design is printed on fabric by pushing ink through the silk onto the fabric with a squeegee. A stencil can be used to block out parts of the screen.

There are some problems which need special attention to overcome:

- <1> The connections between the repeats;
- <2> Registration of shapes;
- <3> Smooth application of ink;

These require attention to detail and care through every step of the procedure.

8. Proposal Changes.

In my proposal I included garment design & production.

At second review, the panel suggested that I concentrate on fabric design and printing. Therefore I am showing here, only the garment designs.



Drawing No. 1

90/92 cm

Acrylic

Cotton



Drawing No. 2

90/92 cm

Acrylic

Cotton

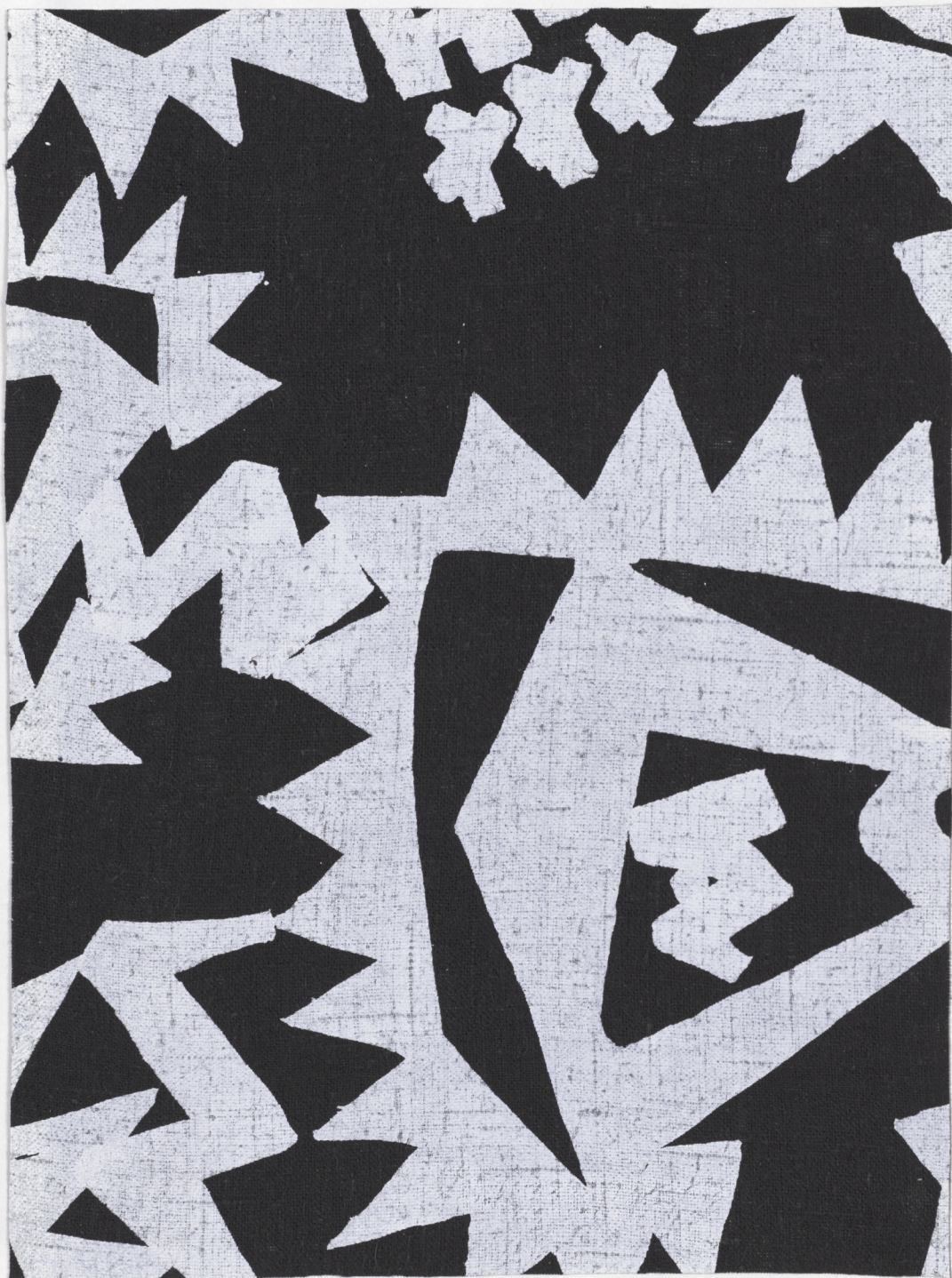


Drawing No. 3

90/92 cm
Acrylic
Cotton

FABRIC DESIGNS/PRINTED FABRIC







Fabric No. 1

"pottery"

Width 90 cm

Repeat 71 cm

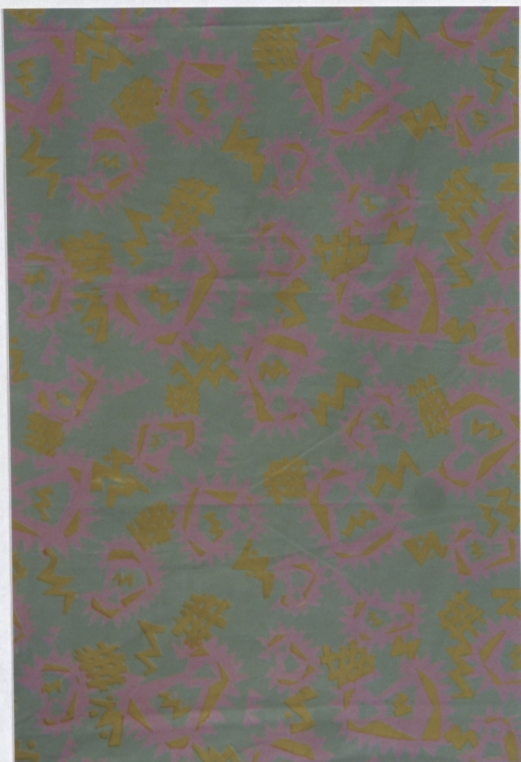
Fabric cotton

Pottery is the main image in this design. The pottery image is from drawing No1. I used a zigzag, hard shape and outline, trying to give power and new life to the primitive pottery.



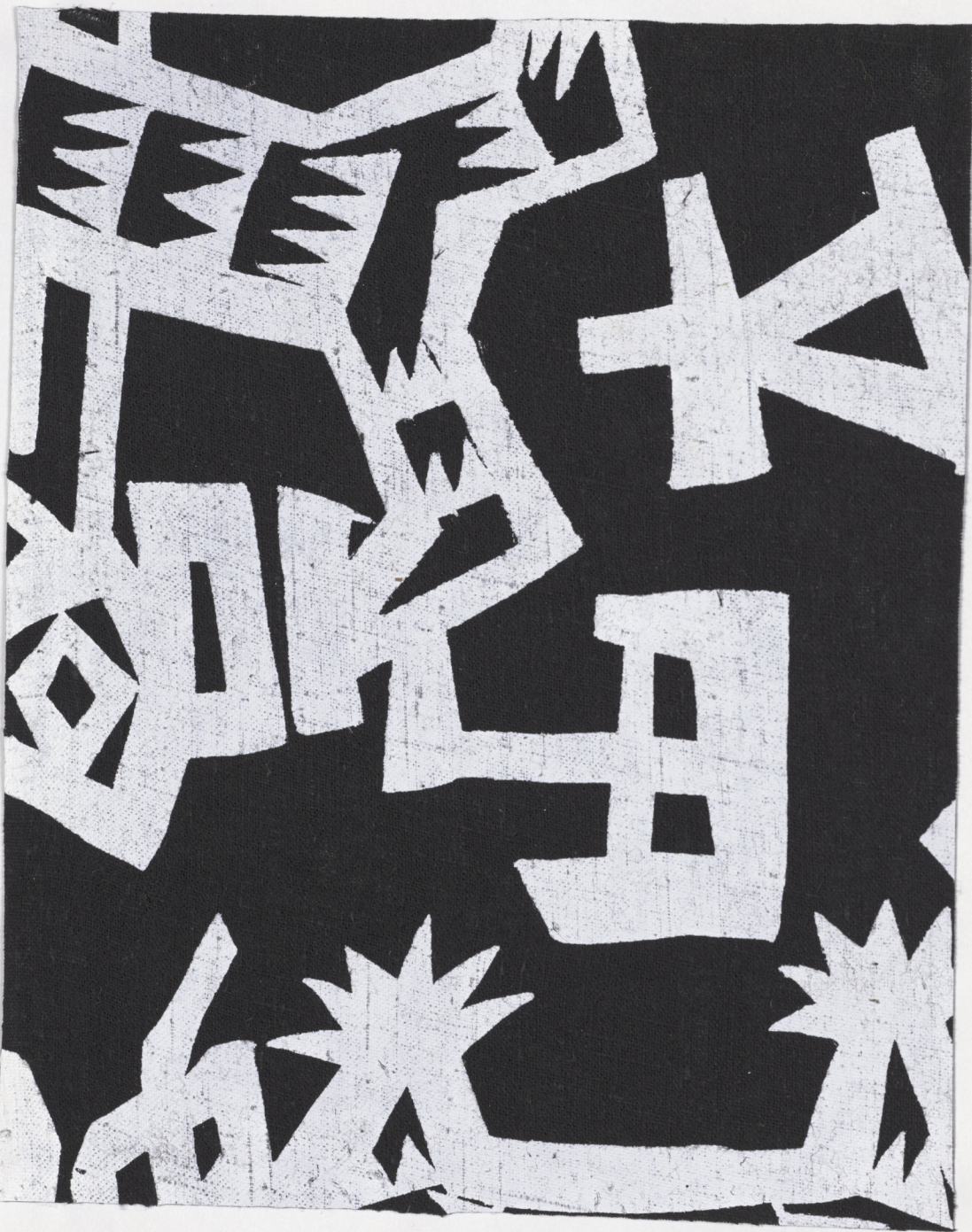
Fabric No. 1

Width 90 cm
Repeat 71 cm
Cotton



Fabric No. 1

Width 90 cm
Repeat 71 cm
Cotton





Fabric No.2

"Frog pattern/Ancient characters"

Width: 90 cm

Repeat: 71.5 cm

Fabric: cotton

Ancient inscribed bones have lost their ability to communicate as we no longer can read the inscriptions. All that remains is mark and form. However, people can still guess the meaning.

The image of inscribed bone is used with painted pottery to evoke a sense of mystery and simplicity.



Fabric No. 2

Width 90 cm

Repeat 71.5 cm

Cotton

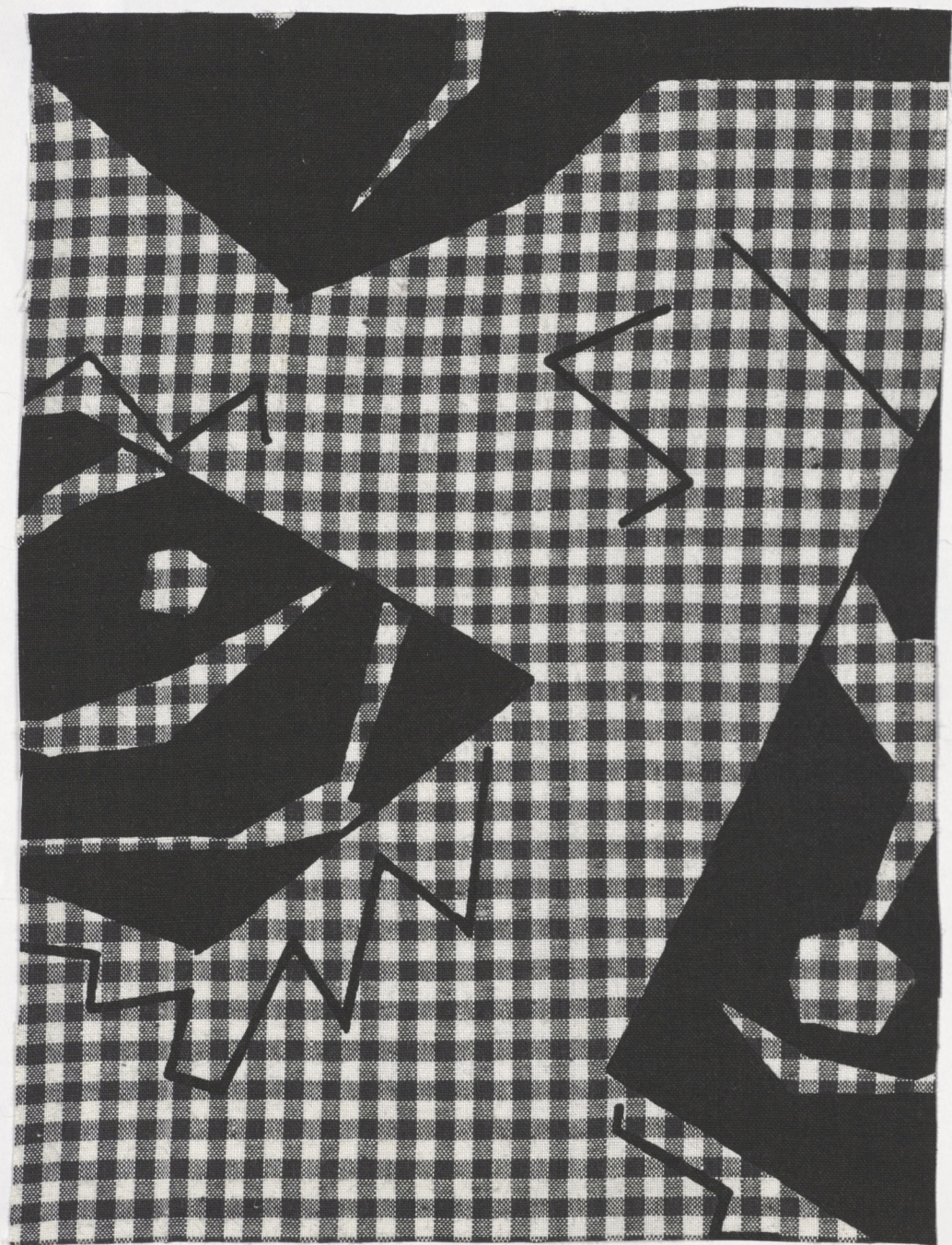


Fabric No. 2

Width 90 cm

Repeat 71.5 cm

Cotton





Fabric No. 3

"pieces"
Width 90 cm
Repeat 75.5 cm
Cotton

The painted pottery, which had been under the ground for several thousand years was unearthed as pieces. Each fragment must contain many stories. This work was designed from the painted pottery pieces.



Fabric No. 3

Width 90 cm

Repeat 75.5 cm

Cotton



Fabric No. 3

Width 90 cm

Repeat 75.5 cm

Cotton





Fabric No.4

"spirit"

Width 90 cm

Repeat 76.5 cm

Cotton

" The highest principle of creation is
real.

The biggest source of creation is life.

The best form of display is simple."

-- from a Chinese translation of quote from
Henry moore.



Fabric No. 4

Width 90 cm

Repeat 76.5

Cotton



Fabric No. 4

Width 90 cm

Repeat 76.5cm

Cotton





Fabric No.5

"Line"
Width 90 cm
Repeat 76 cm
Cotton

Line is the main expressive element of painted pottery. In traditional Chinese art we can also say it is line art in some ways. Chinese handwriting is the most representation of line art.

In this piece of fabric, I tried to use line, on its own to convey the real beauty of the pattern on painted pottery.



Fabric No. 5

Width 90 cm
Repeat 76 cm
Cotton



Fabric No. 5

Width 90 cm
Repeat 76 cm
Cotton

1945

Group Fashion - Blue
The Great Wall of China
Province
Hotel China

CURRICULIM VITAE

JUNQIAN CHEN

Born: 27/2/1964 Wenling Zhejiang
China

Education:

1978 - 1980 Wenling Senior High School
Zhejiang China

1984 - 1988 Bachelor's Degree of
Engineering
Zhejiang Tech. Institute of
Silk
Hangzhou China

1991 -1992 Graduate Diploma of Art
Australian National University
Institute of Art
Canberra School of Art

Awarded:

1987 First Prize
The Competition of Drawing,
Photograph
& Handwriting of Universities
in Hangzhou
China

1988 Second Prize and Win Prize
Fashion Design Competition of
Anhui Province
China

Exhibition:

1987 Group Exhibition
Hangzhou Zhejiang China

1988 Group Fashion Show
The Great Theatre of Anhui
Province
Hefei China

Original proposal

1. Aims:

A. Fabric Design:

To research contemporary Western design for printed textiles.

To re-interpret traditional Chinese design using ideas from contemporary Western design.

B. Garment design:

To develop a range of garments integrating fabric design and garment structure.

2. Methods and Materials:

<1>. Methods:

a. Pattern design on paper.

b. Handdrawing the pattern on fabric.
((screen printing)

c. Making garments, Using the handpatterned fabric.

<2>. Materials:

Cotton, silk, fabric paints and dyes applied by brush will be the main materials and method to cotton and silk.

3. Reference points:

Chinese traditional textile art sharply contrasts with Western styles. With thousands of Chinese styles as reference, I will seek to put these two contrasting styles together. The modern style of Western textile design gives me a new enthusiasm and initiation to produce new and aesthetic designs.

4. Timeframe:

The maximum time envisaged is 12 months. The first 9 months will be spent researching, developing ideas, drawing and designing for printed textiles, as well as exploring design on fabric(s), making samples using various techniques. Then producing the complete fabric for use in garments.

The last 3 months will be taken up designing and making garments for display.

Reynolds, Sandra
The Art of Sandra Reynolds
Jonathan Cape Ltd London 1988

Mackey, Elina
Fashion Australia
Elina Mackey Design Pty Ltd Australia
1997

Pien, Elin
The Craft History of China
Knowledge Publication, Sweden
1993

Mackey, Elina
The Great Aussie Fashion Designer
Fashion Designers 1988 - 1998
Kevin Wicks and Associates Pty Ltd, N.S.W.
Australia 1994

Michael, A O 'Favell'
Keepers of the Secrets
Aboriginal Art from Australia
18/11/98 - 18/2/91. ISBN 2 9044991

West, Margie K. C.
The Inspired Dress
Life Art in Aboriginal Australia
Presented by the Museums and Art Galleries
of the Northern Territory

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Simth, Bradley and Wang, Wango
CHINA, A History in Art
1973, acc. No. 004631

Swann, Peter
Art of China Korea and Japan
Tham's and Hudson, London 1963

Zhu, Min
The History of Foreign Art
Shandong Education Publication, Shandong,
China 1986

Rhodes, Zandra
The Art of Zandra Rhodes
Jorathan Cope Ltd. London 1984

Mackey, Elina
Fashion Australia
Elina Mackey Design Pty. Ltd. Australia
1987

Tian, Zibin
The Craft History of China
Knowledge Publication, Shanghai, China.
1985

Mackey, Elina
The Great Aussie Fashion (Australian
Fashion Designers 1984 - 1985)
Kevin Welden and Associate Pty Ltd. N.S.W.
Australia 1984

Michael, A O 'Farrall
Keepers of the Secrets
Aboriginal Art from Arnhemland
18/11/90 - 10/2/91. ISBN 0730907996

West, Margic K. C.
The Inspired Dream
Lifes Art in Aboriginal Hustralia
Presented by the Museums and Art Galleries
of the Northern Territory



GARMENT NO. 2

GARMENT NO. 1



GARMENT NO. 2

GARMENT NO. 3



GARMENT NO. 3